



As Haryana witnesses violence, Delhi Police keep watchful eye on "sensitive"

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DCM Devendra Fadnavis acted on 1.14 lakh letters in 11 months



RTI activist Anil Galgali has been informed by the Deputy Chief Minister's office that the number of letter received from ordinary citizens, very important persons and government officials disposed of in the office of Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis is 1.14 lakhs.

RTI activist Anil Galgali asked about the action taken on letter so far in the office of Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis regarding ordinary citizens, very important persons and government file. The Deputy Chief Minister's Office has given the figures in a reply sent to Anil Galgali. The number of VIP posts and correspondence disposed of by DCM Devendra Fadnavis since assuming office is 32,508. Also the number of General Post and Correspondence disposed of is 74,703 while the number of disposed of file is 7176. Devendra Fadnavis took oath as Deputy Chief Minister on 30 June 2022. The statistics for the last 11 months have been given and a total of 1 lakh 14 thousand 414 letters and letters have been disposed of.

Why would Lord Shiva be incarnated as a quack in Modern times?

Editoritis



Dr. Vaidehi

There are hundreds of so-called spiritual (gurus) marketers in India who have created illusions and pretended to be Gods; Lord Shiva is most common in this trend. Sadguru Jaggi Vasudev to an absconder Nithyananda believed to be the incarnation of Param Shiva or Adiyogi Shiva. If you remember the statement given by Nithyananda when he was being handed from legal clutches, he said 'I'm Param Shiva, no stupid court can touch me'. Yes no court could touch him because he was untraceable and his disciples were a huge vote bank and no government wanted to risk it by arresting him. If he is really Shiva then why would he be accused of molestation? Why does he need to issue such statements? Shiva never boasted himself being

whatever he is.

This is more of physiological play, one as you think so you become. And second as you create an illusion someone has to trust you if not all. It is basically a mind game. Why does this person called Nithyananda dress himself like Lord Shiva and call him "Parama Shiva"? Because there are some blind followers who believe in what he is projecting. Some may even claim that they have seen miracles, which can be sheer coincidence or fluke. Then there are some marketing managers who bank on these incidents and use this word of mouth publicity. A person who is convicted for obscenity, kidnapping and molesting girls is worshipped.

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Editoritis

Why would Lord Shiva be incarnated as a quack in Modern times?

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Yogic power attained by men creates ego and pride, if one is not careful, he is doomed. You will find hundreds of such so-called God's who make demands in the name of donations, spiritual events, building some temples or in the name of some or the other thing

In the early 1990s, under the governance of Mulayam Singh Yadav's Samajwadi Party, criminals were flourishing in UP. In 1996, Mukhtar was elected from Mau, and the gang, with its arsenal of AK 47 and other weapons

Human brain secretes "serotonin" when you hear exciting things like what Nityananda or any religious leader promises

Some Sadhus or spiritual saffron entities think, talk and behave like Shiv; they attain the nature, power and wisdom of Dhakshina murthy. They finally merge in the Shiv tatva (element). It is an internal process of self-transformation into divinity. However, if one does it for worldly fame and gain, to cheat people, it won't last. Such an attitude will push them into the depths of hell sooner or later. Most of these so called sadhus, sorry Shiva are loomed in some or other controversies that too for the lust or attraction for various women.

Avatars are born (poornam) complete, they exhibit divinity and divine powers. Their conduct, wants, wisdom and self-control on all sorts of cravings are unimaginable. Yogic power attained by men creates ego and pride, if one is not careful, he is doomed. You will find hundreds of such so-called God's who make demands in the name of donations, spiritual events, building some temples or in the name of some or the other thing, at large they do no good to the nation or society. Their attempts are narrow and efforts are for personal goals. They see gain in whatever they do; why would Shiva really need to do this?

Each godman adopts a 'uniform' for identification by his devotees. Lekhraj Kripalani, a Sindhi jeweller who founded the Brahma Kumari movement claimed that he was Brahma of our divine trinity. In the pictures displayed in Brahma Kumari Ashrams he is depicted as Brahma seated in a lotus along with Vishnu and Shiva on their respective mounts. The Dera-Sacha -Sauda chief used to dress himself in the attire of Guru Gobind Singh complete with a head gear adorned with a peacock feather. He stopped dressing himself as the Sikh Guru after being given a warning. There was a Bala Saibaba (recently deceased) who not only sported the hair style of Puttaparthi Saibaba but also his loose upper robe and mannerisms. Osho Rajneesh used to wear a robe which was differently coloured on the outside and inside. Sometimes the use of similar uniforms by different god men may cause confusion. The only cases with no scope for confusion are with sages who wear no clothes at all! If humans are God, then what are Gods for?

Human brain secretes "serotonin" when you hear exciting things like what Nityananda or any religious leader promises. Like "delaying sun from rising", "flying" and so on, getting Rainfall, making a dead alive and blah blah it produces "dopamine", which leads to addiction to such stuff. Look at the number of people who are addicted to "Harry Potter" or "Game of Thrones". These are similar. People just want to escape their boring daily lives and want to go into fantasy for at least some time. While "Harry Potter" and "Game of Thrones" tell upfront that they are "fake" and tell you those stories for entertainment purposes, these religious leaders and pseudoscience claimers use this to cheat and extract something or the other thing.

So, why does Nityananda or so-called incarnations of Gods do all these? Because how much you educate people about these, they'll still go for it, because it's hardwired in the human brain. These quacks in the Gods world are unsinkable rubber ducks and gullible people will always keep these guys alive. Nityananda is a controversial figure in India who has gained a following among some people who are interested in his teachings and spiritual practices. However, he has also been accused of various legal and ethical violations, including sexual assault, kidnapping, and fraud.

People with their boring and ordinary lives seek such pleasure and tend to follow 'gurus' who can show them that (illusory) path. A couple of thousand dollars is nothing compared to the blessings of these fake gurus. Some people claim that Jaggi Vasudev is the incarnation of Shiva Aadi Yogi? Do you believe in such claims? He is absolutely WRONG about his self-made perceptions of Shiva which he preaches to others. I don't know what garbage lore he talks about, but in no authentic scriptures Shiva is said to be 16000 years old or nothing or that which is not. He is just a neo pseudo guru, who is a very good businessman. He is an influential and convincing talker who can sway gullible English knowing people who know nothing much about Shiva. Shiva does not mean falsifiable definitions one makes.

Remember God Shiva is inside everyone and everything as he is Parmatma, which resides in everyone. Essentially, everyone is Shivamay (element of Shiva) . 'Indians' have a very bad habit of treating and thinking of humans they ardently love or devoted to as 'Gods'. We are all born from the same source of creation. You may call it Shiva, Brahma, Vishnu or any other name. We all are in a way "incarnation" of those deities because; the qualities that we appreciate in each of these deities are already present in us. It may not be quite apparent at first, but everyone is capable of being a creator — nurturer — destroyer (Brahma — Vishnu — Mahesh) in their lives. If you learn to find your God within you, you will never fall for the religious scams across and promote their illusions as bhakti and that itself is service to spiritual awakening. Those who have these Godly elements will be around you, holding you, sitting with you, guiding you and expecting nothing from you because that divine element in them will not allow them to compromise you on any level. Such Godly humans are rare and if you find them you are blessed.



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Letters to the Editor

Prevent Accidents

It is seen that there is an increase in the incidents of accidents due to landslides during monsoons. The government should think about what can be done to prevent such accidents. At the government level, such works are very slow. Help flows from places like social institutions, and rich temples. But does the government as a system have any responsibility or not?

Uday Waghvankar

BEST should raise fares for survival than wait endlessly for funds from BMC!

BEST buses are the lifeline of the city but can they survive with minimum fares as little as ₹ 5 (₹6 for AC) in a city where 'cutting Chai' costs ₹10. Inflation is at an all-time high but public transport is one of the cheapest in Mumbai. Subsidies for the poor may be necessary but commuters don't mind paying a little more in return for better facilities & an efficient mode of travel.

Depending on BMC for funds could be a long wait for BEST to upgrade its services, more so because it is run by politicians & surrounded by corruption. A minimum fare of ₹10 will double BEST undertakings revenues, will not hurt commuters much & help the Organization to survive on its own funds for the long haul!

S.N.KABRA

'Man Ki Baat' without Manipur Ki Baat

One more 'Man Ki Baat' was presented without 'Manipur Ki Baat'. The Prime Minister delivered the 103rd episode of Man Ki Baat on Sunday, in which he flagged various issues of the country, but avoided commenting on Manipur violence. The Prime Minister kept saying 'Mera Desh' in his talk, but could not utter a word regarding the victims of Manipur. Is Manipur not a part of 'Desh'? Why is Prime Minister not heeding to Manipur? When will he remove the state government? The Whole country is anxiously waiting for PM's statement. His silence is affecting the state badly. Now, the Prime Minister must break his silence at least for the sake of consolation of the victims.

H.K. Isha'ati

Ginger joins hands with tomato

Due to the supply shortage in the market, traders are visiting different places in India to procure ginger. According to a commission report, the prices started rising since April this year. The price of ginger increased from about Rs 150 a kilogram to Rs 250 in the last few months in some parts of India. Ginger is commonly used for nausea and motion sickness. Most Indians are reeling under the red hot price spike of daily food items such as tomato, ginger, chilly, brinjal and cumin. However, sadly, the finance ministry today flagged an upcoming likely scenario that offers no hope to the common people to get an escape from the price pressure.

Isha Tapadiya

Train like Pandemonium, Fish Market

Women exchanged slaps, slippers in Kolkata's local train, making it look like scene straight from a 'fish market'. Back in our school days, whenever students made a ruckus in class, teachers would playfully exclaim, "Is this a fish market?" Little did we know that this metaphor would find its way into a recent viral video of women engaging in a heated fight in a Kolkata local.

The clip captures the intensity of their altercation, with slaps and slippers being exchanged that even surpassed what one might typically associate with a chaotic market. Other people too present there tried to stop them but they kept fighting. What a distasteful! all and sundry deem that it is not good to fight in public places because it causes restlessness for others as well. It is RPF responsibility to stop such mishaps which are occurring a lot and keep people safe from this sort of disgusting scene.

Shahnawaz, Bhukkaler

Promoting Breastfeeding: "A Vital Step for Health and Well-being"



World Breastfeeding Week, observed from August 1 and known as World Breastfeeding Day, originated in 1992 with support from governments, UNICEF, WHO, and other health institutions. It aims to raise awareness for breastfeeding worldwide. In 2016, the campaign aligned with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (WBW-SDGs), focusing on maternal and infant health. It advocates policy changes and improved infant feeding practices to benefit newborns.

This year's theme is "Enabling Breastfeeding: Making a difference for working parents." The campaign emphasizes the impact of workplace support, paid leave, and evolving parenting norms on breastfeeding. Breastfeeding holds significant importance for both infants and mothers, offering numerous benefits for their health and well-being.

World Breastfeeding Week conducts programs in 170+ countries, supporting mothers and emphasizing breastfeeding's immense significance. It saves over 800,000 children annually, aids postpartum recovery,

and reduces health risks.

Raising awareness is crucial, as only one in three children are breastfed. Uniting breastfeeding communities is a key focus of the campaign.

Breastmilk works like a baby's first vaccine, protecting infants from potentially deadly diseases and giving them all the nourishment they need to survive and thrive," said Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of WHO. Breastfeeding provides essential nutrition and antibodies for babies, leading to fewer infections and better overall health. Breastfeeding is crucial for an infant's growth and development. It offers numerous health benefits, including reducing the risk of various diseases.

Ideally, breastfeeding starts within an hour of birth, offering antibodies for the baby's immune system. Expressing milk is an option for mothers who cannot breastfeed. Although certain conditions may prevent breastfeeding, it's generally recommended for both baby and mother's health. Reduced breastfeeding rates in developed countries result from urbanization, changing lifestyles, and the availability

of formula milk.

Despite its significance, only 41% of babies worldwide are exclusively breastfed for six months. The World Health Assembly aims to raise this rate to 50% by 2025. Increasing global breastfeeding rates saves lives and brings economic benefits. Governments must create awareness and support for new mothers. Indian government can promote breastfeeding through policies, training healthcare staff, and organizing awareness campaigns.

Thus, breastfeeding offers numerous medical, emotional, and economic benefits for both mothers and babies. Governments play a crucial role in promoting and supporting breastfeeding to counterbalance the influence of the baby food market and ensure the well-being of infants and mothers.

- Dr. Krishna Kumar Vepakomma

Columnist

Readers are requested to mail Letters to the Editor only at

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No postal letters will be entertained

(The views expressed are authors' own.)

City

BEST bus services affected as private bus operator's employees go on flash strike



Bus services of the Brihanmumbai Electric Supply and Transport (BEST) undertaking were affected on many routes here on Wednesday as contractual employees of a private bus operator hired by the public transport body went on a flash strike in the morning, officials said. A BEST spokesperson

said employees of the private bus operator SMT, also known as the Daga Group, stopped work at the Ghatkopar and Mulund depots of BEST in the eastern suburbs over their demand for salary hike, affecting services on several bus routes. The BEST undertaking, which provides public bus services in the metropolis, has hired buses from a few contractors including the Daga Group on a wet lease model, under which private operators own the vehicles, besides holding the responsibility of maintenance, fuel and salaries of drivers.

Now, BMC to develop theme park in Malad



The BMC has planned to develop a theme park on 6.5 acres of land. This move comes after the Mumbai suburban collector gave directions to hand over the land located in Malvani, Malad, to the BMC for garden development.

The plot is located opposite Atharva College. Local MP Gopal Shetty had made suggestions to the BMC to develop the space in a manner similar to the Vedic theme park at Noida Sector 78. The space in Noida was once a dumping ground.

Yellow alert issued in Mumbai today; orange alert for Aug 3



The IMD has indicated an increase in rain activity for Mumbai, Thane and Palghar for August 2-3. A yellow alert for August 2 has been issued for parts of Mumbai, Thane and Palghar indicating heavy rains at isolated places. An orange alert has been issued for August 3 indicating heavy to very heavy rains at isolated places in parts of Palghar, Thane and Raigad. Mumbai, meanwhile would continue to be under a yellow alert

for August 3 as well. "Increase in rainfall activity is expected over parts of Konkan and the ghat areas of Madhya Maharashtra during the next three days with reduction thereafter," said an IMD official. On Tuesday, Mumbai saw meagre rain activity across the city and suburbs. In the 24 hours ending at 8.30am on August 1 the IMD Colaba and Santacruz observatory recorded 2 mm and 3 mm rain respectively.

With a lull in rain, BMC scurries to repair all pothole-riddled roads before next downpour

Taking advantage of the ongoing dry spell in Mumbai, the BMC has begun filling potholes on roads across the city. The roads that were dotted with potholes and highlighted by media have also been taken up for repairs on priority, said officials. However, this move has sparked questions from civic activists, who are critical of the BMC's reactive approach to the problem instead of proactively addressing it beforehand. In Andheri, activist Ashok Pandit,



who had raised concerns about potholes on the road opposite Citi Mall, said that when he vis-

ited the site again on Monday, he found that the BMC had levelled the road.

Man falls from 115ft in Thane, survives

In a miraculous escape, a labourer identified as Prem Prakash (33), fell from a height of 115 feet from the under-construction bridge. He along with three others suffered only minor injuries. Prakash said he was lucky to be alive, but felt sad that his friend Luvkush Kumar (25), who got him the job, died in the mishap. He is undergoing treatment at Shahapur government hospital and doctors



said he will be discharged soon. Prakash hails from Bihar, and has lived in Mumbai for the past 13 years. Previously he worked as a sweeper in a truck. But eight months ago, Kumar got him a job as a labourer at the site.

Killer cop in custody, says he's unaware of events on train

Chetan Singh, a 34-year-old Railway Protection Force (RPF) constable who gunned down his superior and three passengers on the Jaipur-Mumbai Superfast Express, was remanded into police custody till August 7 by a magistrate's court on Tuesday. In a three-page application, Government Railway Police (GRP) sought his custody saying Singh was not cooperating with the investigation and they were yet to find the motive for the killings. Singh gunned down the head of the RPF escort team, assistant sub-inspector Tikaram Meena, 57, around 5.15 am as the train neared Vaitarna station. In the same compart-



ment, he also shot and killed Kadar Bhanpurwala, 62, an elderly resident of Nalasopara. The third victim was Syed Saifuddin Moinuddin, who remained unidentified on the day of the incident. He was shot dead in the pantry

car. Sources said Moinuddin was dragged from coach B2 to the pantry with the rifle pointed at his back before being killed. The last person Singh turned his weapon on was Asghar Abbas Shaikh, 48, in coach S6.

Nation

As Haryana witnesses violence, Delhi Police keep watchful eye on "sensitive" areas



As the neighbouring state of Haryana witnessed violence in Nuh and Gurugram districts, Delhi Police on Wednesday went on alert mode, keeping a watchful eye on "sensitive" areas. Delhi Police Public Relations Officer Suman Nalwa told ANI that in the wake of violence in Haryana, the police in the national capital are on alert mode with officers on the ground. "We are aware of what is happening in our neighbouring state, where there have been in-

cidents of violence. We are very much privy to that information. And keeping that in mind, we are also on alert. Any sensitive area is covered. We are keeping a watchful eye on all our areas, all our officers are on the ground," the officer told ANI. She said that if required, extra security forces in these areas will be deployed. Violence broke out between two groups on July 31 in Haryana's Nuh district. Following this, the security in the districts adjoining Nuh -- Faridabad, Palwal, and

Gurugram-- were strengthened. Meanwhile, members of Bajrang Dal and Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) on Wednesday staged protests in several parts of Delhi against the violence.

Earlier, on Wednesday, Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar informed reporters that a total of 116 people have been arrested in connection with the violence in Nuh, which has, so far, claimed 6 lives — 2 police homeguards and 4 civilians. "Six people — 2 homeguards and 4 civilians — have died in the violence so far. A total of 116 people have been arrested in connection with the violence. They have been taken on remand. Those found guilty will not be spared. We are committed to ensuring order and public safety," Khattar said. "The overall situation in the state is normal. I appeal to the public to maintain peace and brotherhood," the Haryana chief minister said. ANI

Two 'hybrid' terrorists of LeT arrested in J-K's Baramulla: Police



Ahead of Independence Day, two 'hybrid' terrorists of the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) along with arms and ammunition were arrested from Baramulla's Azadgunj, said J-K police in a statement of Wednesday. The arrested accused has been identified as Faisal Majeed Ganie, a resident of Bungalow Bagh, Baramulla and Nourul Kamran Ganie, a resident of Bagh-e-Islam, Old Town Baramulla.

Duo were held by the security forces following a specific input and search 1 Pistol, 1 Pistol Magazine, 4 live Pistol rounds

and 1 Grenade were recovered from possession during personnel search, said police.

"The duo was arrested during a checking drive initiated following the specific input of their movement. Joint forces of Baramulla Police, 53 battalion of Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and Army's 46 RR placed a mobile vehicle check post (MVCP) at Azadgunj." "Two suspect persons who were coming towards Azadgunj Baramulla tried to flee while noticing joint naka party but was apprehended tactfully," read the official statement. ANI

1984 riots case: CBI opposes Tytler's anticipatory bail, court to pass order on August 4



The Rouse Avenue Court on Wednesday reserved the order on anticipatory bail moved by Congress Leader Jagdish Tytler in the case of killings in the Pul Bangash area in the 1984 anti-Sikh riots case. The

Special Judge Vikas Dhull, after conclusion of the submissions made by all parties, decided to reserve the order and fixed August 4 for pronouncement of order.

During the hearing, the CBI, through Public Prosecutor Amit Jindal, opposed Jagdish Tytler's anticipatory bail plea and said the witnesses have come forward showing great courage and the possibility of influencing them cannot be ruled out. CBI said as per the statement of new witnesses, prima facie, the role of Jagdish Tytler appears. CBI said that the case is decided on the basis of merit, now relief cannot be sought on the basis of doubt. ANI

"Will not come to Lok Sabha until MPs behave..." Om Birla on disruptions in Parliament

Witnessing uproarious scenes in Lok Sabha, since the Monsoon session began, Speaker Om Birla has decided to refrain from chairing the Lower House until the members behave in accordance with the dignity of the House, sources said on Wednesday. Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla was not in the chair as the Parliament re-assembled for the day on Wednesday.

According to sources, Om Birla has expressed deep displeasure with both the ruling party and the opposition over the functioning of the House. Birla told both sides that he will not come to Lok Sabha until MPs behave according to the dignity of the House. Even today, when the



proceedings of the House started, Birla did not come to the Speaker's seat. Meanwhile, the din continued in the Lok Sabha leading to its adjournment till 2 pm and for the day later amid uproar over Manipur. Meanwhile, a total of

31 members of the Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance, including the 21-member delegation of Opposition MPs which went to Manipur for a two-day visit, met President Murmu today. ANI

481 cases reported to police regarding false promises by touts to tourists in Delhi in 1.5 years: MoS Rai

Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Nityanand Rai on Wednesday informed Rajya Sabha in a written reply that 481 cases have been reported to Delhi Police regarding false promises by touts to tourists

in the national capital in 2022 and current year till July 15.

MoS Rai said, "The cases reported to Delhi Police for false promises by touts include cheating, overcharging etc. and are registered under the Delhi Prevention

of Touting & Malpractices Against Tourists Act, 2010. During the last one year and current year (upto 15/07/2023), 481 cases have been reported, out of which 61 cases have concluded into conviction and 01 case into acquittal." ANI

Bihar govt suspends teachers' training programmes to engage them in caste survey

A day after the Patna High Court held the caste survey in Bihar as "valid" and "legal", the state government on Wednesday swung into action and suspended all ongoing training programmes for teachers so that they

can be engaged for early completion of the exercise. In a letter, State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) Director Sajjan R urged competent authorities to immediately suspend all such teachers' training programmes.

World

North Korea calls US human rights envoy a “political housemaid” in protest of criticisms



North Korea hurled misogynistic insults on Wednesday at a newly confirmed United States special envoy to monitor the country’s human rights issues and warned of unspecified security consequences if Washington continues to criticise its human rights conditions. The statement published by North Korea’s official Korean Central News Agency described Julie Turner as a “wicked woman” who was picked by the Biden administration as a “political

housemaid” to launch groundless attacks on the country’s human rights record.

The US Senate confirmed Turner’s appointment July 27. She previously served as the director of East Asia and the Pacific at the State Department. The statement said the Biden administration’s public criticism of North Korea’s human rights situation highlighted its hostility toward Pyongyang in the face of an intensifying nuclear standoff between the countries. KCNA

described Turner’s past criticisms of North Korea’s human rights record as absurd, and said the US “revels in meddling in the internal affairs of a sovereign state and slandering it.” “Turner should know that she was chosen as a political housemaid and scapegoat for the human rights’ plots to pressure the DPRK, a poor policy set forth by the Biden administration driven into a scrape in the DPRK-US nuclear confrontation,” the agency said, using the initials of the North’s formal name, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea.

The agency said the continued US criticism on North Korean human rights issues could “backfire on it, spawning severe security issues.” In defiance of Washington last week, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un hosted senior delegates from Russia and China at a Pyongyang military parade that showcased his intercontinental ballistic missiles designed to target the US mainland. ANI

Russian drone strikes damages port infrastructure in Odesa, claims Kyiv



The port and industrial infrastructure of the Odesa region were damaged after Kyiv met with a barrage of drone attacks in the early hours of Wednesday, CNN reported citing the head of the Ukrainian regional military administration, Oleh Kiper. This comes after both Russia and Ukraine accused each other of carrying cross-border attacks on Tuesday. “At night, the enemy directed attack UAVs to the south of the Odesa region. As a result of the attack, fires broke out at the facilities of the port and industrial infrastructure of the region, and a grain elevator was damaged. All response teams are at the scene,” Kiper posted on

Telegram.

As of 5:30 am local time, there were no reports of casualties, according to Kiper, though he added that the military command will provide the final data and results of combat work. Meanwhile, the strikes come soon after Ukraine shot down 10 drones over Kyiv early Wednesday, CNN reported. Serhiy Popko, head of the Kyiv City Military Administration, confirmed about shooting down 10 drones over Kyiv, in a Telegram post early Wednesday. Initial information indicates that Russian forces used Shahed barrage munitions in the barrage of attacks, Popko said. ANI

Pakistan: Amid economic crisis, inflation rate crosses 28 per cent



Amid soaring prices and slumping economy, the inflation rate in Pakistan has increased by 3.46 per cent reaching 28.3 per cent in July, ARY News reported citing the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS). As the inflation in July crossed 28 per cent, the finance ministry predicted the rate to be between 25-27 per cent.

The price of potatoes increased by 8.16 per cent, fresh vegetables by 37.64 per cent, tomatoes increased by 33.45 per cent and fresh fruits by 17.90 per cent, ARY News reported. Earlier on Tuesday, the Pakistan government jacked up the price of petrol

by 19.95 Pakistani Rupees per litre for the next fortnightly review. The announcements were made by Finance Minister Ishaq Dar in a press conference.

“Petrol price has been increased by 19.95 PKR per litre to 272.95 PKR, while high-speed diesel is being increased by 19.90 PKR to 273.40 PKR,” ARY News quoted Dar as saying. The revised prices will come into effect immediately, he said, adding that hike in fuel prices was inevitable in line with the commitments made with the IMF on slapping petroleum development levy (PDL) to the rates. ANI

Rain fury wreaks havoc in China, Beijing records heaviest rainfall in 140 years

Persistent and heavy showers pounded China, with capital Beijing recording its heaviest quantum of rainfall in the last 140 years, CNN reported on Wednesday, citing local meteorologists. This comes as Typhoon Khanun has also lashed parts of Japan with wind and rain.

Between Saturday and Wednesday morning, 744.8 millimetres (29 inches) of rain fell in the Chinese capital from the remnants

of Typhoon Doksuri, according to the Beijing Meteorological Service – the heaviest rain over consecutive days since records began in 1883, CNN reported. Meanwhile, Typhoon Khanun packed winds of 220 kilometres per hour (137 mph) – the equivalent of a Category 4 Atlantic hurricane – as it made its nearest pass to Japan’s southwestern Okinawa islands early Wednesday. In the past 24 hours, many locations in Okinawa have

received 175 to 220 millimeters (6 to 8 inches) of rainfall, according to CNN Weather on Wednesday morning.

The centre of Khanun is forecast to stall in the East China Sea in the next 48 hours, potentially making a turn toward Japan’s northern Ryukyu Islands over the weekend and avoiding a direct hit to China’s eastern coast, which has been drenched by the remnants of Doksuri. ANI

Afghan citizens voice concerns about slow passport distribution process

The Afghan citizens have raised their concerns regarding the slow passport distribution process in the country and stated that not having a passport had caused residents to face several issues, TOLONews reported. In interviews to TOLONews, the Afghan citizens said that they asked the General Directorate of Passports to speed

up passport distribution in the nation's capital and other provinces.

However, under the Taliban regime, the people of Afghanistan continue to only face problems. “I’ve been coming here for about three or four days, and I requested a name change on my passport. The manager collected our documents, and I don’t know what will happen next,” said Id-

ris, a resident of Kabul, according to TOLONews. Passport applicants have been attempting to get passports for many years, but they have not received them. Separately, another resident of Kabul, Zazai said, “People are having a lot of issues. Some of them applied a year ago, but they haven’t yet received them. People have (medical) patients.” ANI

Scoring High Marks in Board Exams



Vijay Garg

Retired Principal Educational
Columnist Malout Punjab

It is a common experience that students today are scoring more marks in state and national level board exams than earlier. A direct result of this 'grade inflation' is that the cut-offs for college admissions have been rising steadily over the years. In the short run, higher marks may seem like a win-win deal, as it makes students, schools, parents and politicians all happy. Nevertheless, overall it has long-term detrimental effects on the education system.

The ever-increasing test scores mean 'grade inflation' is an international phenomenon, but the situation in India is somewhat unique. The rise in marks in India is also a result of competition among boards. In many states, students from both state and central boards compete for college seats. The college board selects the students on the basis of their marks in the examinations. Normally no adjustments are made while comparing between education boards.

It is worth noting that in the 1970s and in the 1980s, central boards started awarding higher marks to students in areas where they felt they had to do so to make their students competitive with the respective state boards. Gradually other education boards also realized that they too can do the same or they had to do this too,



then slowly everyone started giving more marks.

Today it is common to get 100% marks or close to it in every subject. Interestingly, in Nagaland, the average of the highest marks in the board between 1975-79 was 75.4 percent, which increased to 89.9 percent in 1980-84 and increased to 97.6 percent in 2015. The average for the four years from 2020, including the Covid period, is 98.8 percent. The situation is more or less similar in other states as well. Top students have started getting more and more marks year after year. It also has many negative consequences. Firstly, it increases the pressure on students, parents and schools to score high marks. Stress also increases regarding admission in college. Students are forced to pay tuition.

Another serious problem, which is not felt, that is Boards also start

reducing the difficulty and type of questions in the exam, so that more and more students can score high marks. They give marks very liberally. The race to score high marks increases the importance of marks and places less emphasis on teaching and learning. Researchers have found that even if mediocre studies lead to top grades, it works against hard work at studies.

At the same time, higher marks also create a false impression that students and the education system are doing better. Many people would have been happy with a higher score as long as are until unemployment comes. In a country like India, where a vast majority of the population takes exams, there is an excellent solution called Criterion Reference, which involves providing 'percentile scores' instead of using percentages or grades. Be it the top 0.1 percent students in Delhi or Tamil Nadu, they

should be treated equally as the best. It should not be seen that in Tamil Nadu board students got maximum 90 marks and in Delhi 95 maximum.

Delhi's best and the best of Tamil Nadu should be considered at the same level. Percentile scores can be used to identify groups of top performers on each test. This is an effective method where the number of examinees is large and varied. One of the recommendations of the National Education Policy 2020 is to ensure uniformity of academic standards among students across all school boards. The government is in the process of setting up a National Assessment Center for this purpose. Use of percentile in board exams This can be an important method and can help in improving the quality of education in the country.

Entertainment



Raaj Rawal, son of Popular actress Pooja Ghai to make his film debut with "The Unspoken"

The Indian film industry is abuzz with excitement as a highly talented new actor makes his entry into the digital platform. Raaj Rawal has released his short film, marking his debut, showcasing his talent and versatility as an actor. Titled The Unspoken, this film takes audiences on an emotional rollercoaster, and also portrays Raaj's ability to breathe life into his characters. The short film not only highlights his incredible acting prowess but also serves as a testament to his dedication and pursuit of excellence.

Raaj Rawal, the son of popular actress Pooja Ghai, will capture hearts and captivate audiences with his extraordinary acting skills. Following in his mother's footsteps, Raaj has embarked on a remarkable journey, honing his craft from renowned institutes and has also gained valuable experience from working behind the scenes.

Raaj's passion for acting led him to pursue his dreams at the prestigious Lee Strasberg Institute in the United States, where he studied the art of method acting. Under the guidance of renowned instructors, he refined his skills and acquired a deep understanding of the intricacies of the craft. Eager to further enhance his abilities, Raaj returned to India to complete a diploma course at the esteemed Jeff Goldberg Studio, renowned for its commitment to fostering excellence in acting and in addition expanding his skill set by learning dance at the esteemed Ganesh Acharya Dance Academy. Moreover, Raaj is leaving no stone unturned in his quest for physical fitness and stamina.

As Raaj began his journey in the world of Indian cinema, he first ventured into the industry as an assistant director. Assisting in the making of notable films such as "Mission Majnu" (Starring Sidharth Malhotra & Rashmika Mandanna, Directed by Shantanu Bagchi) and "Laxmi" (Starring Akshay Kumar & Kiara Advani, Directed by Raghava Lawrence) Raaj gained valuable insights and behind-the-scenes perspective into the filmmaking process.

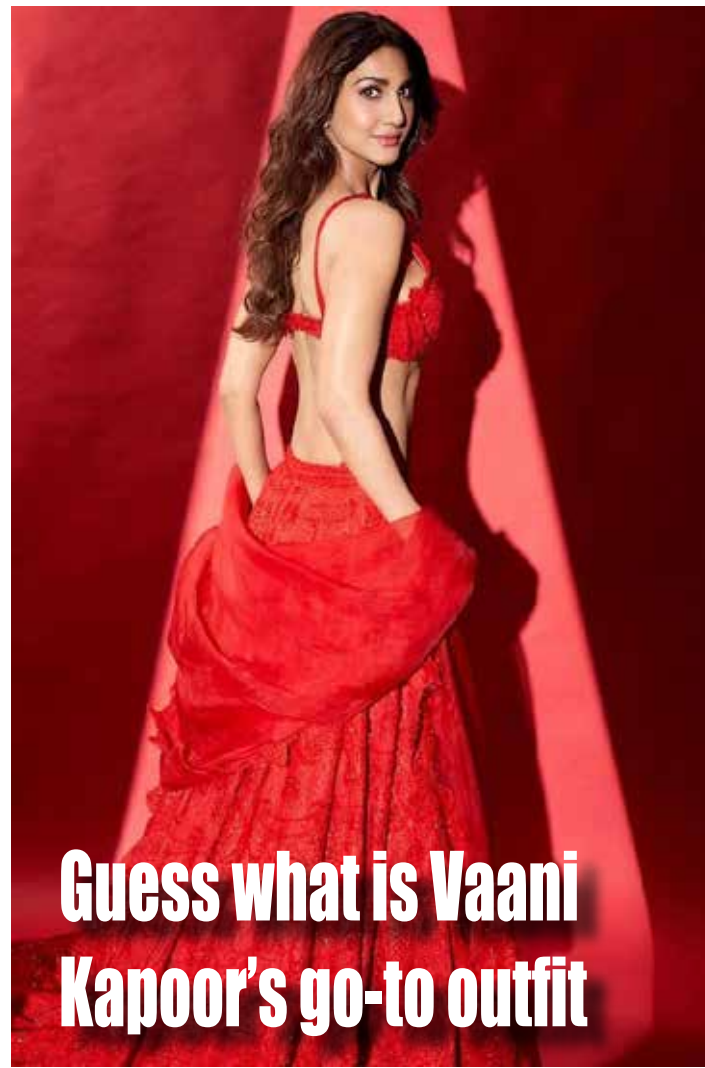
He has also worked for the production team on a web series called Hum, Tum & Them produced by DJ's. These experiences allowed him to grasp the nuances of storytelling and further solidified his determination to make his mark as an actor.

With his inherent talent, extensive training, and determination to create impactful cinematic experiences, Raaj Rawal is all set to leave an indelible impression on the hearts of audiences across the nation.

Priyanka Chopra looks for 'super moon' with daughter Malti

Actor Priyanka Chopra and singer Nick Jonas have been treating their fans to adorable pictures and videos of their daughter Malti Marie lately. Taking to Instagram, the Desi girl on Wednesday shared adorable pictures of herself with her daughter Malti Marie while she took her on a walk.

She captioned the post, "Looking for the super moon." Priyanka wore an overall white casual outfit while the toddler can be seen in a printed pink dress. In the first picture, Malti was pointing towards the moon in the sky while the 'Citedal' actor was looking at her. ANI



Actor Vaani Kapoor surely knows how to catch the attention of the audience with her fashion statement. Vaani turned showstopper for the designer Isha Jajodia, who made her debut with 'Romantic Reverie' collection on day 8th of India Couture Week.

Vaani walked the ramp wearing a stunning red chikankari ensemble that featured the esque handcrafted details over the blouse, skirt and dupatta. She wore a sleeveless blouse with a plunging neckline. She slayed the fusion-inspired outfit like a queen.

Her smokey eyes blushed cheeks, glossy lips and wavy hair raised the glam quotient on the ramp. To complement her entire outfit, she added a diamond emerald neckpiece.

After the show, the 'Chandigarh Kare Aashiqui' actor shared what's her go-to outfit. "My go-to outfit is track pants and slippers. I won't dress up like this on a weekend but yes on a special occasion," she told ANI

Guess what is Vaani Kapoor's go-to outfit